

Good afternoon. I am Theresa Robinson, Commander of the United Veterans Council of Kent County. In case you are not familiar with our Council, we represent over 50 Veteran organizations in the county and Kent County is home to over 32,000 Veterans. Kent County is also home to the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans.

Senator O'Brien and committee members, I thank you for this opportunity to speak and I thank you for your concern about this very important subject.

I would also like to thank Senator MacGregor, for taking time from his busy schedule to meet with the United Veterans Council of Kent County ..Veterans Home Committee, Monday afternoon to review this important bill. The subject of an Ombudsman has come up frequently over the years, and we are glad to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

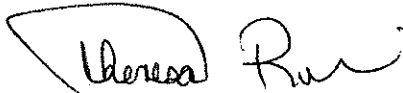
Our Veterans residing at the Michigan State Veterans Homes proudly served their country, and it is our responsibility to see that they are treated with dignity and respect. When I say "our" responsibility, to our Council, that means the Veterans of Kent County and the state of Michigan, along with each and every elected official of the State of Michigan and ALL residents of this fine State, we call HOME. Being treated with dignity and respect, includes providing them with a fair and simple method to voice their concerns about problems with their care and treatment in "their home."

We believe that this bill provides that vehicle with the introduction of the Ombudsman. Not only is this a proven method, it is one that has been used by the military for many decades and is familiar to Veterans.

What do we like about this bill? We like that the Ombudsman is housed outside of the MVAA and reports to the Legislative Council. We like that the funding does **not** come from the MVAA, as every dollar appropriated for the Homes needs to be used for direct Veteran care in the Homes. We like that the process has a paper-trail and specific guidelines and timelines.

I thank you for this opportunity to address your committee, and remind you that your Veterans stand ready to assist whenever and wherever we can.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Theresa Robinson', enclosed within a hand-drawn, irregular oval shape.

Theresa Robinson

Commander

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